Dear Harold:

I just phoned the telephone number attributed to Harold Dean in your recent letter. It's a janitorial service that operates, apparently, day and night. ("Out of the mouths of very babes shall.....") Do you really think I should follow through on this? I guess I'll give him a call during the daylight hours in the hope of finding him in. It's not, after all, his home phone.

Everyone is very frayed at the nerve ends out here. Maggie seemed at the end of her tether for the past few days. Some student from Liebler's class phoned her and by a rather cool, unemotional pitch for an hour or more had her convinced (only momentarily, of course) that we were not all paranoid: i.e. the Commissions supporters weren't, just the critics. She felt that it was "Jim" that himself had put the student up to calling her. Liebler told Lillian Castellano by phone that we should all be "sharing" our information one with the other, i.e. critics with commission staff! Said Liebler to Lillian "I suppose that Sylvia Meagher thinks I'm some kind of monster." He then went on to offer Lillian a chance to see the Zapruder slides. This last offer was put forth at a meeting of the exclusive Hollywood Hills Democratic Club where Ray and Liebler were originally scheduled to have some kind of colloquy. Ray finally demurred for a number of reasons even though they had agreed to undertake the expenses of duplicating some photographic materials that Ray had asked to be made up if he were to confront Liebler. They actually wanted a debate, however, and Ray wasn't in any mood for polemics. So Guy Endore the novelist took Ray's place and Lillian attended. Lomax and Walker were there with their wives and Schiller, of all people, was introduced as an "outstanding photographic expert" who answered questions about the Zapruder slides no less! Even Robert Vaughn put in a brief appearance as the Man From UNCLE. (He's never said a thing to me since I put all those books in his hands some months ago.)

The long and short of it is that Lillian never got to see the Zapruder slides through Liebler's intervention. Although she did see them. But only after extradrdinary representations made to Ed Kearn by Ray over the phone. All of us trooped down to the local TIME-LIFE Bldg last Friday morning and spent several hours (just the four of us Ray, Lillian, Maggie and myself.) carefully sorting them out and comparing them with those printed in the volumes. Some of them were out of order and a few misnumbered as a result. One was missing compared to the equivalent in the volumes. Shocking treatment to be accorded to primary evidence by a major mass media publication. But after seeing the missing frames with the sprocket holes on the bottom and top of a blacked-out portion of the extension to the left of each of four frames I was unable to conclude there was anything sinister about the whole controversy. The portion between the sprocket holes on the frame of the first generation copy set from the original shows the secret service men on the right hand running board of the follow-up car. That is on the last slide before the missing frame series begins. The SS men are looking up in the direction of Zapruder or the knoll. There is a slight movement of the free arm of the agent furthest forward on the running board but nothing indicative of anything in particular. I can't believe in 4/18.3 seconds later there is a substantial revelation of which we are deprived. There is a slight loss of color fidelity in the missing frames. Presumably they have been made up from one of the other copies in Dallas that day and given to LIFE or the Secret Service. In the process of printing or enlarging the portion between the sprocket holes has not been reproduced. I think there may be non-sinister reasons that could explain this. Further there are no stress marks on the road sign as David Lifton has argued.

Although Dave is reluctant to admit that he has been wrong on this. What he sees and what we all see are scratch marks at various points on different frames. Ray Marcus argues that these are a result of the spliced frames. This may well be possible especially if it can be shown that these marks radiate uniformly from the top and bottom sprocket holes, but while this is possible it is not always evident or demonstrable to a layman such as myself. Similar marks or scratches of a more irregular variety appear elsewhere and are not part of such "rays" that could have been caused by a splice.

Sylvia's visit was "heady wine" to most of us. She arrived from Toronto (I think I mean Victoria, B.C.) which she found not particularly rewarding in retrospect. As the Grover Whalen of the "Critic Establishment" I met her at the airport while Ray was supposed to be picking up Penn and L.A. from Bakersfield. When I showed Sylvia her letter from you (in carbon copy form) she was genuinely touched by your feeling and consideration for her at this particular time. What with the pressures of the book and her work at the WHO. We had a talk on the way back to Maggie's and then I left them to return home before collecting at Ray & Letha's for dinner where Mr. Field appeared with Maggie and Lillian was on hand as well. Penn was in particularly high spirits. I had never seen him quite so ebullient, although a stronger, livlier more colorful set of adjectives would be applicable to this bawdy Texan. After dinner Penn and Sylvia adjourned to KLAC for a fifteen or twenty minute dialogue with Mort Sahl who spoke from Las Vegas where he is appearing in a night club act. The nature of the hookup didn't permit Penn or Sylvia to answer questions. They just spoke with Mort. Saturday night Arnoni gave a talk that went off like 20.000 tons of TNT! Maggie and Sylvia were introduced from the floor as was Penn for their work on the Warren Commission (their "scholarly research" was saluted) and the whole thing was under the auspices of "The Minority of One" subscribers in Los Angeles. Maggie gave a reception afterward for Arnoni and we talked until 2:00 in the morning. Sylvia and Ray had a real contretemps over Schiller with Ray saying "I hope that record is purchased by millions just so they can hear the beeps on the horn of the police car signaling Ruby to do what he did". Sylvia retorted that it was rather thoughtless to wish that record well on the basis of its(lack of)intrinsic merit and because of what it did to the critics. Ray countered "You too involved to have any objectivity about it." At which point Sylvia justifiably lashed out "Now your're really becoming objectionable" and turned on her heel and went to another portion of the room. Ray does have something more than a mere argumentative streak about him to be sure. A person of great personal integrity and uncompromising honesty, but awfully intractable and rigid sometimes. There has been a distinct cooling of relations for reasons beyond my comprehension between Ray and myself. Indeed, between Maggie and me. I think it stems from the Lifton business. It's all so petty. I would agree that Lifton has, perhaps knowingly, compromised himself by his association with Liebler. Has been used by Liebler. And the fruits to Lifton from this kind of symbiotic relationship would seem to be small indeed. But earlier Maggie urged me to keep up my contacts with him to learn what was going on in the other camp. The biggest factor may be the fact that Lifton has confided in me certain fundamental lines and details from his new thesis on the case that he is attempting to evolve. I think it is of major importance and I am pledged not to reveal its contents. I didn't ask to be put in that position either, but there are certain trusts that are placed etc., and for the same reason that I would not, have not, reveal something you told me in confidence. Sylvia wanted this information and urged that it be shared with the critical community. But Lifton thought otherwise and his isolation began. I think he was perhaps mistaken, but we can only judge the merit of his work and the decision to keep it secret when it finally appears.

Lillian remains her usually delightful self. I was so glad she could see the slides inasmuch as her expertise inethe Zapruder film is almost as great as Ray's. It is really remarkable the way she has gone back into the case with the enthusiasm and gusto of the past weeks shows. She is working in Pasadena several days a week doing some kind of accounting or book keeping I gather. Apparently, the financial drain of her husband's illness and death have been terrific. I know Ray was helping her find work and Maggie wanted her to do some work on the panoplys for money, but that would have been only a small amount for a limitied period of work.

Going back to the slides I think I should note something about the head shot. Someone has speculated that the particular frame showing the gore flying out of the President's head was touched up. The first generation slides reveal a golden yellow blur of certain definition covering an area above the right ear and forward of it extending over the right temple area. In short, one does not see the right rear portion of the President's head as having been hollowed out. The wound is thus advanced to a different area more forward than we had been led to by the autopsy findings as the situs for the head wound. On the other hand it is difficult to conclude from the pattern of the explosion as to the site of and nature of the head wound. It is difficult to impeach the autopsy on the basis of these slides. But questions are raised that should be answered. William Manchester on his appearance on NETelevision in the fall of 1965 said that some of the slides were never published because they were too gruesome. If this is so, then LIFE may have brushed them of some of that gore. I think Manchester is more likely mistaken and that the record shows that LIFE did indeed publish the head shot rather early on. As for the movement of the President's body sharply backward and then left in to Mrs. Kennedy's arms has already been noted by Thomas Stamm in his memorandum. I found it clearly discernable from my three hour study of the slides. It was, I felt, a movement independant of that of the car or any other of its occupants.

The Lane-Liebler debate was for the most part a "ho-hum" affair with a few new nuances. I felt Liebler showed that he had prepared well for the encounter and that Lane had not. Ray and Maggie were in ecstasy over Lane and thought Liebler dismal. I think this ingrown attitude is unnecessary and not particularly helpful, but we've been through all that before and I don't think I need recapitulate. Liebler tried to use the head shot to his own purposes although he had not mastered Lifton's research on it and his extrapolations were quite dishonest. Lane's retort indicated he has yet to master the photographic evidence of the case. Lifton had briefed Lane on what Liebler had been doing and what he might pull in debate but he failed to mention the preparation of an exhibit by Schiller for Liebler that was a photograph, blown up to huge proportions, indicating that the nose shadow could be duplicated short of a dual solar system. Lifton indicated to me that some of this had been fudged and didn't represent an "honest" attempt on the part of Liebler or Schiller to answer the discrepancy posed by the famed Oswald photograph. If you want a tape of the affair I'll be glad to make you a copy. Getting Liebler to sign a release for broadcast was a touchy affair, although we finally made it.

One other interesting conflict that took place during Sylvia's visit occurred just before we went to the Mort Sahl taping on Sunday night at which Penn and Sylvia made appearances. Penn started on about how the assassination was planned in Houston and that Johnson(President) was a homosexual and so was Oswald and otherwise why would the latter's pubic hairs have been discovered to have been shaved when the autopsy on him was performed: Ray adding embellishments about the prostitutes involved in the case and that was also a key that should

be run to earth. Sylvia quietly demurred from the whole tenor of the discussion and privately told me such unscientific meanderings could only do the cause harm. That we musn't depart from an evidentiary way of research and become involved with things we can't really grapple with on a factual basis. It was interesting to see that there were great conflicts between critics on how best to proceed. Of course I would agree that if an investigation into anyone's sexuality can lead us to crucial findings in the case it must be pursued, but not bandied about in a sensational manner. Ray and Maggie both seem adamant on this business of hanging a conspiracy noose around Earl Warren and the Commission members and if that's the test of trust and loyalty within the Critic Establishment (and let's call it what it really has become without any invidious overtones) then I'm afraid both you and I are beyond the pale. The other thing that oppressed Sylvia was the fact that Penn is on record as speaking of the wall-to-wall carpeting in Ruby's cell and the TV set. I really don't know his source or basis in fact for such an assertion but it does tend to undercut his credibility rating with many people and that is too bad because he is basically a level headed fellow with decency and honesty about him.

I didn't mean to ramble on needlessly about all this, but it has been on my mind and I did want to share it with you privately. And it must be private as I'm sure you understand since I am thinking out loud as it were. I hope some of my imaginings are wrong and that the petty differences that seem to exist are of a transitory nature and therefore will pass.

The letterhead is most elegant on the bonded onion skin paper! Congrats/ I left my number with Harry Dean's place of employment and will let you know if he calls back as he wasn't in when I phoned during the day.

Apparently, the Lane BBC appearance transpired night before last and was grossly unfair to Lane; the press here carried a report that switchboard operators at the BBC were busy taking the protests for the manner in which he was treated.

I worked on the Lucy show last week and I was most grateful for the job. She was delightful and we performed before a live audience after two days of intensive rehearsal. I had only a small role,but amusing. Tennessee Ernie Ford was the guest and it was the last show of the season so you can watch for it probably next month.

Best wishes to you and Lil,

Bill